

## **Arsenal commander addresses Armed Forces Day luncheon**

***by Rachel Newton***

Pine Bluff Arsenal personnel, Pine Bluff Rotary Club members and other guests were treated to a double dose of PBA hospitality May 15 during the annual Armed Forces Day luncheon. Not only were attendees served a delicious fried chicken dinner, compliments of Susan Hunter and her crew at the Arsenal's community club, they were able to listen to the eloquent words of Arsenal command Col. Brian Lindamood.

"What a great looking crowd! We want to thank everyone for coming out today," said Sgt. Maj. Jerry Curtiss, in his introduction of Lindamood. "This isn't going to be a hard task for me today and it is easy for a couple reasons. The gentleman I get to introduce today is someone I have known for a quarter-century. I believe success require three things in every individual – energy, enthusiasm and passion. The gentleman speaking to you today is our 34<sup>th</sup> Arsenal commander – a very successful commander."

Before he addressed the capacity crowd at the Arsenal's training center, Lindamood presented a coin to Cathy Roper from Simmons First National Bank who sang the National Anthem. He also thanked Elizabeth Thomas, command administrative assistant, for organizing the luncheon.

"As I am winding down my tour and beginning the arduous process of compiling my 'best of Arkansas' list, you guys got to sample the best fried chicken in the state – special thanks to Susan and her girls for lunch today," he said.

Before delving into his speech, Lindamood presented a video entitled "Before You Go", which coupled with a moving song paid tribute to World War II-era service members. "I have a little video for you to watch today and I'm going to give you some things to think about," he said. "The only thing I will say is that this video and comments following are purely my own. This is just one Soldier's view of the world on a very special day."

Lindamood said that when his wife's father, a former Soldier, passed away in 2001, the nation was losing its greatest generation at about 1,200 a day. "We will wake up tomorrow and they will all be gone. And what will have been their legacy?" he said. "Fortunately, the next greatest generations are taking their place slowly now. Kids whose names you don't know who come from towns you don't know and never will. All you need to know is that they come, and are willing to pay a very high price."

Since this is a Rotarian meeting and those present are interested in helping the community, Lindamood said that America's business today has nothing to do with the stock market or financial indicators. "We are dealing in a commodity more precious," he said. "We are in a point in the history of our nation, where we have a unique opportunity to export hope. At the same time, young men and women are taking the message of hope to places who have known none for a millennium – to countries whose recorded histories outdate our own by some 4,000 years."

Armed Forces Day is a day to think about these young ambassadors out there – with rifles in hand, rucksacks on their backs, helmets on their heads, in inhospitable places, said Lindamood. "They are there and carrying the message for you. Ponder what it takes to export hope Jefferson County," he said. "Right now the most important weapon in their arsenal is being threatened. The weapon doesn't fly or sail, it isn't a nuke and it doesn't even shoot. It is your resolve. It is your willingness to go out and understand the truth about what is happening in this world and understand the importance of exporting hope and everything that comes with it."

Lindamood said that people need to be willing to step out and voice their opinion. "Whether it is in the polling place, at a public gathering or in your own homes, we need to be standing behind these young men and women. They need to know that when they look back, you are still standing," he said. "The heroes of the next greatest generation believe in what they are doing. It is our responsibility to believe in them and to keep them equipped with the greatest weapon – hope. "

The luncheon concluded with a prayer by Lt. Col. Casey Scott, commander of the Pine Bluff Chemical Activity.